



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Council Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 19, 2022

6:00 PM

Roll Call

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Gomez Mouakad at 6:04 pm and adjourned at 7:20 pm. Councilor Strezo moved to adjourn, and the motion was passed by roll call vote. Councilor Pineda Neufeld left at 6:30 pm due to another meeting.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo - Mayor's Office, Adrienne Pomeroy - ADA Coordinator, Bonnie Denis - Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Present: Kristen Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld and Ward Five City Councilor Beatriz Gomez Mouakad

New Business - Equity and Gender

1. Order (ID # [22-1298](#))
By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Director of Health and Human services discuss the potential effects of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health on Somerville women, pregnant women, pregnant people and reproductive health.

Ms. Carrillo said that she forwarded information from the director of Health and Human Services before the meeting. The HHS director is in the process of convening meetings with CHA and Tufts and should have updates in the next few weeks.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

2. Order (ID # [22-1299](#))
By Councilor Strezo
That the Chief of Police provide this Council with the number of rape kits administered in the past five years, and the number that were included as evidence in court cases.

Chair Gomez Mouakad referred to the attachment for this item. Councilor Strezo said her intent with this item is to gain insights into what happens with violent crime in the city. Ms. Carrillo said that the Administration interpreted this as a data request, but is open to a dialogue if the committee has specific questions. Chair Gomez Mouakad suggested writing a new order for the dialogic questions since the requested data has been shared.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Resolution (ID # [22-1300](#)) By Councilor Strezo
That the Middlesex County District Attorney provide this Council with the number of rape kits tested and the number used as evidence in Somerville court cases over the past five years.

Ms. Carrillo said that data could be acquired either through a direct request from a councilor or by asking a staff member to put in a request. She suggested Councilor Strezo contact the Law Office to proceed.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Old Business - Equity and Gender

4. Order (ID # [22-0594](#)) By Councilor Wilson, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott and Councilor Kelly
That the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development and the Somerville Arts Council update this Council on the Arts Space Needs Assessment and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) report.

Chair Gomez Mouakad said that she had spoken with Councilor Wilson and that he was satisfied with the material provided.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order (ID # [22-0671](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Parks and Recreation report on enrollment processes, communications, matriculation data, staffing and programs offered in the past five years.

Ms. Carrillo said that the Administration is not prepared to respond to this item today.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

6. Order (ID # [22-0471](#)) By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Chief of Police provide this Council, in writing, data from FY 2021 for all traffic citations, outcomes of those citations, and any collected demographic data.

Chair Gomez Mouakad kept this item in committee to have SPD staff speak to it.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

New Business - Families and Vulnerable Populations

7. Resolution (ID # [22-1458](#)) By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Administration update this Council on the timeline and process for identifying a permanent Teen Center.

Ms. Carrillo said that the Mayor is committed to this and that she is having conversations about the Teen Center, but there is no concrete timeline yet. Councilor Pineda Neufeld commented that she saw advertisements for a teen center from SomerNova and asked if that is the same project.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

8. Order
(ID # [22-1272](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the ADA Coordinator deliver a list of ADA complaints received from members of the public in FY 2021 and FY 2022.

Dir. Pomeroy explained that because this item covers two fiscal years, it will take staff time to cover all complaints. She said that the formal ADA complaint form on Somerville's website was not implemented until April 2021. She asked the committee for the intent in requesting this information.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Bonnie Denis of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to speak. Commissioner Denis said that the Commission has been trying to work with the city to gather complaints, and they have been given access to accessible parking funds, but want to know the current community needs before making purchases. Commissioner Denis also said there had always been a complaint form on the website, but it was revised in 2021. Calling 311 is not the official way to file a complaint, though people often do.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Councilor Clingan to speak. Councilor Clingan said that ADA has been a law for 30 years, and there is frustration in the community - a feeling that they can do better. He said that even if the preliminary request here is for data, he would like to have a discussion later on.

Dir. Pomeroy said that RSJ is using a new system for all complaints as part of the FY23 budget. She also stated that the city should respect the number of ways in which community members file complaints. Chair Gomez Mouakad said she would be interested in hearing more about the RSJ complaint system and would look into filing an order to have Dir. Pomeroy present on that.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

9. Order
(ID # [22-1273](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the ADA coordinator deliver to this Council, any budgetary requests of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities from the General Fund.

Dir. Pomeroy said that she interpreted this item as referring to the general budget fund from RSJ; at this time, she has not received formal requests since starting her work. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked if there is a different fund that goes directly to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Dir.

Pomeroy answered that the RSJ general fund is available through request for all three commissions under RSJ.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Bonnie Denis of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to speak. Commissioner Denis said that the commission did have meetings requesting input on the budget and asked for RSJ to work with them to get requests met, including multiple staffing positions and safe street implementation. The Commission was told last year that they needed to bring up requests sooner in the process, and they discussed requests in April or May of this year, but still did not see those reflected in the budget.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

10. Order
(ID # [22-1274](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the Administration provide a report of all public HP parking spaces.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Councilor Clingan and Bonnie Denis of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to speak to the intent of the item. Councilor Clingan explained that these orders came from conversations with residents and commissioners frustrated that they are not getting answers. Commissioner Denis said that they received an account of the number of onstreet spaces from the parking study, but nothing comprehensive of where spaces are located. Commissioner Denis said that the Commission needs that baseline as the city moves forward with street redesign, and that the city needs to meet the legal requirement of 5% of onstreet spaces being accessible. Currently, less than 1% of onstreet spaces in Somerville are accessible. Councilor Strezo suggested the order go through the Director of Parking instead of the Administration.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

11. Order
(ID # [22-1275](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Finance provide a report of handicap parking fine receipts in FY 2022.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Bonnie Denis of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to speak. Commissioner Denis said that they worked with Dir. Bean and staff in the Procurement Office to receive training, and they have been receiving reports since June.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

12. Order
(ID # [22-1276](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Parking provide a record of all parking tickets issued for handicap parking violations in FY 2022.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

13. Order
(ID # [22-1277](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan
That the ADA Coordinator provide a status on requests for Braille transcription of materials.

Dir. Pomeroy said that she has been working with the library at Perkins School for the Blind to transcribe materials into Braille for a constituent serving as an associate commissioner with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. They received materials in August or September, and Dir. Pomeroy is awaiting materials to send to Perkins for the October meeting.

Chair Gomez Mouakad sponsored Bonnie Denis of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to speak. Commissioner Denis said that their intent with this item is to find an ongoing solution and timeline for providing Braille services within the city. The department did put in for a Braille printer, but there is not yet a timeline on how that will be staffed; there are also constraints with needing agendas prepared a month in advance.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Old Business - Families and Vulnerable Populations

14. Order
(ID # [22-0277](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with SomerViva, provide a plan for preventive medicine clinics for immigrant communities.

Ms. Carrillo explained that there will be more updates to this item. For now, there will be a health fair for immigrant communities on October 23. SOIA has been working with Cambridge Health Alliance providing vaccination and enrollment services, as well as exploring a partnership with HHS and CHA. Ms. Carrillo said that the Administration is looking at training its own staff to help with MassHealth enrollment in the future. HHS and CHA are meeting to discuss vaccination partnerships at a school clinic throughout the fall.

Chair Gomez Mouakad highlighted the importance of promoting primary care to communities that tend to self-treat. Councilor Strezo asked what public and private partnerships look like in this context, and whether there is a cost for a patron at one of these clinics or fairs. Ms. Carrillo said that she would bring those questions to Dir. Carroll.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

15. Order
(ID # [22-0286](#))

By Councilor Strezo
That this City Council work with the Administration to explore an internship program for high school students.

Councilor Strezo said that she submitted this item to create a bridge from high school to further opportunities, and to demystify local government. Ms. Carrillo said that she knew there had been interns before, as she had an intern when working in the Housing department. She said that SPS and HHS are having ongoing discussions on this, and asked if Councilor Strezo intended for internships with the City Council as well or just for staff. Councilor Strezo said that she would like to pursue both. Ms. Carrillo said she would check in with Dir. Carroll.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

16. Resolution
(ID # [22-0287](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That this City Council work with the Administration and School District on a year-round expansion of a summer jobs internship program with a focus on addressing Out of School Time.

Ms. Carrillo said that there is no update on this item since last time, but she will check with Nancy Bacci.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED